

Uzbekistan

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

An estimated 16.5 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were counted as working in Uzbekistan in 2000. Approximately 19.9 percent of all boys 5 to 14 were working compared to 12.9 percent of girls in the same age group.⁴⁸⁶⁹ Children work in agriculture in rural areas, where the large-scale, compulsory mobilization of children to help with cotton harvests has been reported.⁴⁸⁷⁰ Schools close in some rural areas to allow pupils and teachers to work during the harvest, sometimes without remuneration. Reports indicate that children have been forced to spray harmful chemicals with no protection and endure poor living conditions on farms located far from their homes and families.⁴⁸⁷¹ There are reports that children help cultivate rice and raise silk worms in rural areas.⁴⁸⁷² Children also work in street vending,⁴⁸⁷³ services, construction, building materials manufacturing, and transportation.⁴⁸⁷⁴ Older children frequently work as temporary hired workers, or *mardikors*.⁴⁸⁷⁵ Child beggars are present in Tashkent.⁴⁸⁷⁶ Children are vulnerable to exploitation as prostitutes in Uzbekistan.⁴⁸⁷⁷ Young women and possibly adolescent girls are trafficked to destinations in the Persian Gulf, Asia, and Europe for the purposes of commercial sexual

⁴⁸⁶⁹ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, October 7, 2005. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the section in the front of the report titled "Data Source and Definitions."

⁴⁸⁷⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Washington, D.C., February 28, 2005, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41717.htm>. See also UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Uzbekistan: Focus on Rural Schools*, [online] August 10, 2004 [cited June 15, 2005]; available from http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=42608&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=UZBEKISTAN.

⁴⁸⁷¹ International Crisis Group, *The Curse of Cotton: Central Asia's Destructive Monoculture*, February 28, 2005, 17-18; available from http://www.icg.org/library/documents/asia/central_asia/093_curse_of_cotton_central_asia_destructive_monoculture.pdf. See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, August 11, 2004. See also Legal Aid Society, STATUS, Center for Social and Humanitarian Researches, Business Women Association (Kokand), Mekhri, Beguborlik, SABO, PIASC, KRIDI, Mekhr Tayanchi, UNESCO Youth Club, Kokand Children's Club, Shygiz Children's Club Kukus, Mothers and Daughters, Bolalar va Kattalar Children's Club, Save the Children (UK), and UNICEF, *Supplementary NGO Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Uzbekistan*, 2001 [cited June 15, 2005], 10, 33; available from <http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.28/Uzbekistan.doc>.

⁴⁸⁷² *Cango.net, Initiative Newsletter: The Situation with Child Labour is Unlikely to Change in the Foreseeable Future*, cango.net, [online] 2002 [cited June 15, 2005]; available from <http://www.cango.net/news/archive/spring-2002/a0002.asp>.

⁴⁸⁷³ Farangis Najibullah, *Central Asia: For Many Young Uzbeks and Tajiks, Working is a Way of Life*, [online] May 27, 2003 [cited June 15, 2005]; available from <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2003/05/27052003154228.asp>. Children work in markets selling various products such as alcohol, tobacco and food. See Legal Aid Society, STATUS, Center for Social and Humanitarian Researches, Business Women Association (Kokand), Mekhri, Beguborlik, SABO, PIASC, KRIDI, Mekhr Tayanchi, UNESCO Youth Club, Kokand Children's Club, Shygiz Children's Club Kukus, Mothers and Daughters, Bolalar va Kattalar Children's Club, Save the Children (UK), and UNICEF, *Supplementary NGO Report*, 33.

⁴⁸⁷⁴ *Cango.net, The Situation with Child Labour is Unlikely to Change in the Foreseeable Future*.

⁴⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷⁶ Study by Mekhr Tayanchi (Support of Love) as cited by Uzbekistan Daily Digest, "Homeless Children Become Focus of Concern in Uzbekistan", September 19, 2003; available from <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/uzbekistan/hypermail/200307/0023.shtml>.

⁴⁸⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 5.

exploitation.⁴⁸⁷⁸ Child labor is one of many problems associated with poverty. In 2000, 17.3 percent of the population in Uzbekistan were living on less than USD 1 a day.⁴⁸⁷⁹

Basic education is compulsory for 9 years under the Education Law of 1992⁴⁸⁸⁰ and free according to Article 41 of the Constitution.⁴⁸⁸¹ In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 103 percent.⁴⁸⁸² Gross enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Primary school attendance statistics are not available for Uzbekistan.⁴⁸⁸³ The early marriage of girls poses a challenge to their continued education since they are expected to leave school, raise a family, and work domestically after being wed.⁴⁸⁸⁴ Parents and students are often asked to cover the costs of school repairs and supplement teachers' incomes due to low salaries.⁴⁸⁸⁵ Rural children are said to lag behind their urban peers in schooling, due to their participation in the cotton harvest and required time away from their studies.⁴⁸⁸⁶

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years. Fourteen year-olds may only work in light labor that does not negatively affect their health and/or development.⁴⁸⁸⁷ Children ages 14 to 18 years are required to obtain written permission from a parent or guardian in order to work, and work may not interfere with their studies.⁴⁸⁸⁸ Children between the ages of 14 and 16 may only work 10 hours per week while school is in session and 20 hours per week during school vacation. Children between 16 and 18 years may only work 15 hours per week when school is in session and 30 hours per week during school vacations.⁴⁸⁸⁹ In addition to establishing limited work hours for minors, the Labor Code prohibits children less than 18 years of age from working in unfavorable labor conditions.⁴⁸⁹⁰

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Uzbekistan. The Constitution prohibits forced labor except when fulfilling a court sentence.⁴⁸⁹¹ The Penal Code establishes

⁴⁸⁷⁸ Traffickers most often target women between 17 and 30 years of age. Ibid. See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, August 26, 2005.

⁴⁸⁷⁹ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2005* [CD-ROM], Washington, DC, 2005.

⁴⁸⁸⁰ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" (1992) as cited in Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, *National Action Plan on Education for All in the Republic of Uzbekistan*, Tashkent, 2002, 13; available from http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/efa/UzbekistanNatlPlan.pdf.

⁴⁸⁸¹ *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992*, (December 8, 1992); available from <http://www.umid.uz/Main/Uzbekistan/Constitution/constitution.html>.

⁴⁸⁸² UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.asp?ReportID=51> (Gross and Net Enrollment Ratios, Primary; accessed October 2005). For an explanation of gross primary enrollment rates that are greater than 100 percent, please see the definition of gross primary enrollment rates in the "Data Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

⁴⁸⁸³ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section for information about sources used.

⁴⁸⁸⁴ Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, *National Action Plan on EFA*, 25.

⁴⁸⁸⁵ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, August 26, 2005. U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 5.

⁴⁸⁸⁶ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Uzbekistan: Focus on Rural Schools*.

⁴⁸⁸⁷ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, October 15, 2002. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 6d.

⁴⁸⁸⁸ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, August 26, 2005.

⁴⁸⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 6d.

⁴⁸⁹⁰ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties Due in 1996*, CRC/C/41/Add.8, prepared by Government of Uzbekistan, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, December 27, 1999, published February 19, 2001, paras. 315 and 318; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/aacfcf7e3feaabf2c1256a4d00391fbc/\\$FILE/G0140749.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/aacfcf7e3feaabf2c1256a4d00391fbc/$FILE/G0140749.pdf). This report was submitted by the government to the committee on December 27, 1999. Also see International Crisis Group, *The Curse of Cotton: Central Asia's Destructive Monoculture*, 18.

⁴⁸⁹¹ *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992*, article 37.

punishment for people who profit from prostitution or maintain brothels, with higher penalties when a child is involved, including jail sentences of 5 to 10 years.⁴⁸⁹² The Penal Code prohibits the recruitment of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation, with higher penalties for taking children out of the country. The penalty for recruitment for sexual or other exploitation is 6 months to 3 years in prison and up to USD 900 in fines. Trafficking of children outside the country is punishable with 5 to 8 years in prison.⁴⁸⁹³

The Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Interior’s criminal investigators are responsible for the enforcement of child labor laws. While enforcement appears effective in deterring child labor in the formal sector, the U.S. Department of State reports that it is not effective in regulating children’s work in family-based employment and the agricultural sectors.⁴⁸⁹⁴ An anti-trafficking unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs investigates trafficking-related crimes.⁴⁸⁹⁵

Despite the presence of inspectors, there were no reports of inspections resulting in legal proceedings or administrative penalties for violations of domestic child labor laws.⁴⁸⁹⁶ The government increased prosecutions for trafficking violations from 80 in 2003 to 251 in 2004, although, due to a general amnesty in 2004 for anyone convicted of crimes with prison terms of less than ten years, most served little or no jail time.⁴⁸⁹⁷ According to the U.S. Department of State, NGO reports indicate that some local officials are involved in trafficking.⁴⁸⁹⁸

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Representatives from the Government of Uzbekistan are working with neighboring countries to gather information about the child labor situation in Central Asia. USDOL has provided funding to ILO-IPEC for a USD 2.5 million sub-regional project to enhance the capacity of national institutions to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Uzbekistan and to share information and experiences across the sub-region.⁴⁸⁹⁹

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments	
Ratified Convention 138	
Ratified Convention 182	
ILO-IPEC Associated Member	✓
National Plan for Children	
National Child Labor Action Plan	
Sector Action Plan	

The government has an inter-agency working group to combat trafficking in persons, and actively cooperates with local NGOs and the OSCE on anti-trafficking training of law enforcement and consular officials.⁴⁹⁰⁰ Ministry of Internal Affairs officials trained an

⁴⁸⁹² Penal Code Clause 121 and 127 as cited by Interpol, *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences Against Children-Uzbekistan*, [cited June 15, 2005]; available from

<http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaUzbekistan.asp>.

⁴⁸⁹³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 5.

⁴⁸⁹⁴ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, August 26, 2005.

⁴⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 6d.

⁴⁸⁹⁷ It is not specified if any of these crimes included the trafficking of children under the age of 18 years. See U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Uzbekistan*, Washington, D.C., June 2005, 224; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/47255.pdf>.

⁴⁸⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 5.

⁴⁸⁹⁹ Countries participating in the sub-regional project are Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. See ILO-IPEC, *CAR Capacity Building Project: Regional Program on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, project document, RER/04/P54/USA, Geneva, September 2004, vii.

⁴⁹⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 5.

additional 1,500 officers in anti-trafficking procedures between May 2004 and spring 2005 and contacts were made with counterparts in the United Arab Emirates, the top destination for trafficked Uzbek women.⁴⁹⁰¹ The government has been cooperating with a local NGO that meets returning victims at the airport and provides rehabilitative services⁴⁹⁰² and actively supported a public awareness campaign including posters, billboards, and advertising on state-controlled mass media.⁴⁹⁰³

In cooperation with the IOM, the government is engaged in a research study to determine the extent of trafficking in Uzbekistan and participates in a trafficking prevention campaign and a law enforcement training program.⁴⁹⁰⁴

The Government of Uzbekistan's 2000-2005 State Program on Forming a Healthy Generation focuses on improving childhood development in such areas as health and education.⁴⁹⁰⁵ To encourage school attendance, the government provides aid to students from low-income families in the form of scholarships, full or partial boarding, textbooks, and clothing.⁴⁹⁰⁶ In addition, children from low-income households are provided with free medical services.⁴⁹⁰⁷

The government has a National Action Plan on Education for All with the goal of ensuring that by 2015 all children have access to free and compulsory primary education.⁴⁹⁰⁸ Through its education reform program, the government is taking steps to expand compulsory education from 9 to 12 years.⁴⁹⁰⁹

The Asian Development Bank provides technical input to policy and program development, and funds education reforms in Uzbekistan.⁴⁹¹⁰ The ADB has provided a USD 55 million loan to promote the efficient and sustainable provision of affordable textbooks to schoolchildren.⁴⁹¹¹

USAID supports a basic education program with USD 400,000 for teacher training, strengthening the capacity of school management, increasing parent involvement in the schools, and providing computers to schools throughout the country.⁴⁹¹²

⁴⁹⁰¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Uzbekistan*, 224.

⁴⁹⁰² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Uzbekistan*, Section 5.

⁴⁹⁰³ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Uzbekistan*, 224.

⁴⁹⁰⁴ Project also includes Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. IOM, *Combating Trafficking in Persons in Central Asia: Prevention, Prosecution, Protection (ASPPP)*, [cited June 15, 2005]; available from <http://www.iom.int/iomwebsite/Project/ServletSearchProject?event=detail&id=KZ1Z016>.

⁴⁹⁰⁵ Government of Uzbekistan, *Information on Implementation on the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 2001, 14; available from <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/doc/replies/wr-uzbekistan-1.pdf>.

⁴⁹⁰⁶ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, August 26, 2005*. See also Government of Uzbekistan, *Executive Summary of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Implementation of the Resolutions of the World Summit for Children*, UNICEF, 2002, 10-11; available from http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/how_country/edr_uzbekistan_en.PDF.

⁴⁹⁰⁷ Government of Uzbekistan, *Executive Summary*, 19.

⁴⁹⁰⁸ Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, *National Action Plan on EFA*, 4-5.

⁴⁹⁰⁹ Three years of professional or vocational training in special training institutes or colleges would become mandatory. The program is expected to begin in 2007. See U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, August 26, 2005*.

⁴⁹¹⁰ Asia Development Bank, *Country Strategy and Program Update (2004-2006): Uzbekistan*, 2003, 19; available from http://www.adb.org/Documents/CSPs/UZB/2003/CSP_UZB_2003.pdf. See also UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Uzbekistan: ADB Helps to Reform the Education Sector", September 20, 2004; available from http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=43252%SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=UZBEKISTAN.

⁴⁹¹¹ Other development partners supporting activities in the education sector include the EU, Japanese International Cooperation Agency, Japan Bank for International Cooperation, USAID, World Concern, and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). See Asia Development Bank, *Country Strategy and Program Update (2004-2006): Uzbekistan*, 18-19.

⁴⁹¹² USAID, *USAID/Central Asian Republics - Country Report: Uzbekistan*, [online] January 2005 [cited June 16, 2005]; available from http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/pdfs/uzbprofile.pdf. See also USAID, *Uzbekistan Portfolio Review* [cited June 16, 2005]; available from http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/car/pdfs/overuzb.pdf.